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Book Review

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

Geriatric Ambulatory and Institutional Care

James D. Lomax, MD, Director, Department of Family Practice, Long Island College Hospital, Brooklyn, New York. Ishiyaku EuroAmerica, Inc, 11559 Rock Island Ct, Maryland Heights, MO 63043, 1987. 209 pages, \$27.50 (paperback).

This multiauthored paperback is intended to supplement traditional textbooks of geriatric medicine and gerontology. It is clearly not intended to be comprehensive or encyclopedic but rather, to cover ten topics that the authors thought were absent or inadequately covered in more traditionally formatted texts. As is common in multiauthored books, the utility of each chapter varies with the depth of coverage and quality of the writing. Most chapters have references; some are as recent as 1985.

After an introductory chapter on the demographics of aging, a chapter on health resources discusses Medicare, nursing homes, home care, hospices, day hospitals, and life care communities. These topics are briefly touched upon in a depth suitable for only the briefest of survey courses in gerontology.

The chapter on rehabilitation provides a good introduction to some elements of physical medicine, including the rudiments of prescribing assistive devices such as canes and wheelchairs. The advice shows common sense, and the illustrations in this chapter are useful. The chapter on geriatric dentistry gives an excellent introduction to a topic often stunted in medical education. A useful feature of this chapter is a section on medical-dental interactions, including aspects of dental care for patients on anticoagulant medication, with pacemakers, or undergoing radiation therapy and chemotherapy.

The chapter on urinary incontinence is brief but covers many important aspects of this major problem. The book includes an excellent and comprehensive chapter on sex and aging. The chapter on ostomy therapy is useful, covering material often lacking in standard geriatrics texts. The application of a problem-oriented systematic approach to the nursing care of elderly patients is also addressed in sufficient detail. A lengthy chapter on prescribing a physical activity program for older persons is comprehensive and may serve as a useful reference. One chapter stresses aspects of health care education pertinent to the elderly, and a brief chapter on death and dying offers some helpful advice concerning care of the terminally ill.

Overall, this book might serve as a useful adjunct to more comprehensive texts in an elementary course on geriatric medicine. The material is not covered in sufficient depth to satisfy the needs of geriatric fellows or other advanced students of this field. As the content of programs on geriatric medicine becomes better defined, the need for such a supplementary collection of topics will diminish as pertinent areas are added to more traditionally formatted textbooks.

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